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Greene Valley Developmental Center Closes

Tennessee becomes fourteenth state to have no large, state-run institutions

GREENEVILLE – The final two people living at Greene Valley Developmental Center (GVDC) transitioned to their new homes on Friday, effectively closing the state institution after more than 5 decades of operation.

Tennessee joins 13 other states and the District of Columbia with no large, state-run institutions for people with intellectual disabilities, which is a significant milestone in improving the lives of people with disabilities in Tennessee.

“People who lived at Greene Valley are now living rewarding lives in their communities,” Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) Commissioner Debra K. Payne said. “We are closing an important chapter in the history of supporting people with disabilities in Tennessee. It’s important to celebrate the huge advancements we’ve made, while remembering the important role Greene Valley played for 56 years.”

Over the past two years, DIDD has transitioned 84 people into community placements. Private providers in East Tennessee constructed 15 four-person homes for people living at Greene Valley whose families wished for them to transition to an intermediate care facility for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ICF/IID).

“I want to take this opportunity to thank all Greene Valley employees for the excellent care they have provided to people with disabilities for more than 50 years,” Payne said. “Also, the entire Greene County community has supported the facility and the people who live there, and we are extremely grateful for their continued partnership as we support people with intellectual disabilities in the community.”

Opened in 1960 and originally named Greene Valley Hospital and School, GVDC was the first and only state institution for people with intellectual disabilities in East Tennessee. At its height, 1100 people lived there. As options for community care grew, including the introduction of Tennessee’s home and community based waivers, the census at the institution declined.

In 1995, Greene Valley, Clover Bottom and Nat. T Winston Developmental Centers were the subject of an investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice and lawsuit brought by advocates for people with disabilities over conditions at the three institutions. After two decades of work to improve the state’s service delivery system, all parties agreed to an Exit Plan in January 2015, which included the closure of GVDC.

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About the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities is the state agency responsible for administration and oversight of community-based services for approximately 8,000 people with intellectual disabilities as well as 4,000 people through the Family Support Program. Every day, the department strives to support people to live rewarding and fulfilling lives. It does so by ensuring people are free to exercise rights, engage with their broader communities and experience optimal health. DIDD is the first and only state service delivery system in the nation to receive Person-Centered Excellence Accreditation from the Council on Quality and Leadership. It has also been recognized as a national leader in its efforts to increase competitive, community-based employment outcomes for people with disabilities.